

Before the "WOW"
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After years of serving in children's ministry, I feel that I've just stumbled onto something that I've missed for so long - the importance of genuinely connecting with the kids. I've tended to think that a dynamic children's ministry should be focused on having creative and impressive object lessons that "Wow" the kids.

But the statement that many of us know, also applies to children's ministry: "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." We can amend that and say, "Kid's don't care how flashy your teaching skills are until they sense the sincerity of your friendship with them."

I believe this is one of the main keys to a successful children's ministry. This is the practice of Christ-like connection. What does this look like? Well, it starts with knowing the names of each kid. It is also nice to know things like their birthdays, the schools they attend, some of their favorite interests, etc. And then there is the very important connection with the parents and siblings of each child.

I have grown so much closer to kids and families just by doing simple things like going to lunch with them after church or visiting them in their homes. Basically, we want to grow in knowing kids in their full context. That will help us better minister to them in their needs, their joys, and their faith development.

God is a Triune God - meaning that He is Father, Son, and Spirit. This Trinity is the great prototype of genuine connection (see Larry Crabb's Book, Connecting).

Therefore, let us bring the love and joy of the Trinity into our children's ministries and truly connect with our kids. Then, they will listen to what we have to say (even if we are terrible at object lessons). They'll learn more about Jesus in how we model friendship to them than they will ever learn through any animated presentation.

So, you don't have to learn how to juggle to be a great children's pastor. Just love your kids with a genuine heart!

~Jesse Joyner, Telling the story of Jesus through the sport of juggling

Jesse Joyner is a master juggler and a captivating storyteller. Having experience as a children's pastor, he's adept at teaching the Gospel in levels of understanding that are fun and memorable, albeit unusual. Jesse's routines are engaging and often rely on audience participation and find relevant, meaningful ways for children (and adults) to learn about

God's kingdom and plan. www.jessethejuggler.com

To bring Jesse the Juggler to your church for a special event, call us toll free at 1-866-774-7469 or e-mail fhk@forhiskidz.com